THE

UNITY

An Organ of Reasonable Religion.

"One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves."—*Tennyson.*

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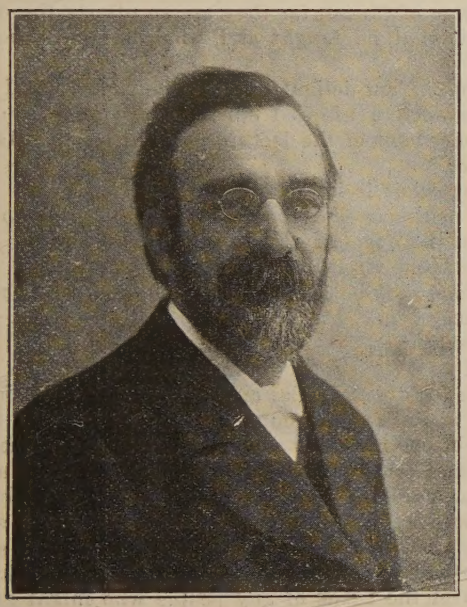

Rev. LUCKING TAVENER.

For some biographical details, see June issue, pp. 62-3, under heading, "How I became Unitarian." Baptist preacher (Spurgeonite), then minister of a Brotherhood church, and ultimately Unitarian minister at Stepney, and now at Ipswich. Mr. Tavener is the author of a book entitled "Among the Dutchmen," describing the character of the Dutch people and some of their great men; and a pamphlet, "In defence of Unitarianism." With voice and pen, as well as with pencil and brush, he has shown much practical sympathy with the new social aspirations of the time. His illustrated pamphlet, "Labour as seen in recent painting," describes some of the pictures by Millet, Moscheles, Walter Crane, William Morris, and G. F. Watts. On going to Ipswich he was asked to deliver a limelight lecture at the Social Settlement in that town on the paintings of G. F. Watts, R.A., which he did to an audience of 700 people, and was pressed to become a member and active worker in connection with that institution, which, being professedly unsectarian, he consented to join. But objection was raised by the warden that Mr. Tavener was "not a Christian," maintaining that the term "Christian" cannot be properly applied to any system of belief which denies "the revelation of the Sacred Trinity." This aroused much discussion and warmth of feeling amongst the townspeople, and Mr. Tavener took occasion to defend his Unitarian Christianity from his pulpit, and denied the right of any person or society to refuse him the name "Christian." Mr. Tavener has carried on a very effective ministry in Ipswich now for nearly seven years with increasing popularity and ever-widening and deepening influence.

Varieties.

I rejoice . . . that this house (a Unitarian Church) is pledged to no peculiar doctrines, that it is not erected to bind my own or any man's opinions on this or on future times, that it is consecrated to free investigation of religious truth, to religious progress, to the right of private judgment, to Protestant and Christian liberty.

—William Ellery Channing, 1836.

God sends his teachers unto every age,
To every clime, and every race of men,
With revelations fitted to their growth
And shape of mind, nor gives the realms of Truth
Into the selfish rule of one sole race.

—J. R. Lowell.

A man has committed suicide on the railway near Sway, Hants. On his body was found a letter to the curate of Brockenhurst, which contained the following:—

"I am a failure. I am going to my father. Look here, old man: Is God going to be more severe to me than I am to my boy? If He is, where does the love come in?"

This is said by the daily papers to be a "theological poser"; it is so to the "orthodox," no doubt, but not to those whose religious beliefs are reasonable and humane.

Now !

The dreamer dreams in his easy chair
Of deeds he may live to do;
When he has an hour or two to spare,
Ah, he will see them through;
But for you and me, in the cause of right,
Now is the time to do and to smite.

The poet sings of a time to be,
A day that has yet to dawn;
The birth of a happy liberty
On some far distant morn;
But for you and me, in the cause sublime,
The day of freedom is in our time.

The preacher tells of a world above,
A home that we all may win,
'Tis there he looks for a life of love,
The soul that is freed from sin;
But for you and me is a duty clear—
To build up heaven and to build it here.

The dreamer dreams of a deed undone,
The poet of days to be;
The preacher tells of a haven won
Beyond earth's misery;
But for you and me, in the midst of wrong,
Now is the time to live and be strong.

Now is the time for the manly part,
The time for the noble deed;
Now is the time for the hero's part,
And now is the time to succeed;
And for you and me, in the strife somehow,
The only time that there is—is now.

—Gus Anderson.

For All or None.

By the Author of "Randal's Principle."

CHAPTER X.

Naturally there was some affinity between Ralph Rendel and Will Smeeton. They were both believers in real Christianity, but were counted somewhat as infidels because they were no longer satisfied with "the old doctrines" of a corrupted theology which they considered was not a true reflection of Christianity at all.

Their daily occupations were very different and their pathways lay very much apart, so they did not see much of each other. One day they met in the street. Rendel shook Will heartily by the hand and greeted him:

"Will, how are you? I hope you are not utterly cast down by being dubbed 'unbeliever.'"

"I'm all right, thank you," said Will, smiling, "and I trust you are too. As to being cast down—I cannot say that I am. Of course, it is not all smooth as you yourself know only too well."

"I do know. But I'm not quite so badly fixed as you are, with your sweetheart's father dead against you. How goes it in that direction?"

"Oh, I think I've no real need to fear. Ruth I feel sure will be staunch to me. I've every faith that she will not be turned against me. Indeed, I have some reason to be thankful that such a test of faithfulness as this should have come to both of us. It not only proves whether I can hold firm to conscience, but it puts Ruth's affection to the strongest test, and compels her to inquire and think for herself in these matters of Faith in a way that is perhaps better before marriage than not until after. But I believe her father is still obstinately against me, though the mother is not."

"It is a pity that Colton is so narrow. But it will come all right in time. Anyway, you have my best wishes. Are you still as unorthodox as ever?"

"Quite as much; indeed more so than ever. The more I think of the old exclusive doctrines the more indignant I feel that they should be sheltered under the name of Christ, for they are so utterly the opposite of what he taught and what he was crucified for."

"True. I am delighted," said Rendel, "that I find in you such a kindred spirit. Have you seen the announcement of the lecture to-night on the Market Square?"

"No; what is it?"

"A man named, 'Randal Wray' is going to lecture in the open-air at half-past seven, and his subject is 'God vindicated, and Hell a delusion.' And questions will be invited at the close. Will you go and hear him? I'm going."

"I will that."

And so they agreed to meet just before the time for the lecture to begin, and did so. Several people stood about and a youngish man of from 30 to 35 years of age gave out some leaflets to each. Then he went and took up his position in the open, unfastened a hand-box of a light portable kind which he had been carrying, and it opened out into a small foot-board, serving as platform, raising him about fifteen inches off the ground, so that he could see well over the heads of any people who might gather round him. On this he took his stand. He invited the few persons within reach to come nearer that they might hear what he had to say. And he delivered his lecture.

More people came, and the audience was numerous. Some came to oppose, to cast ridicule on the lecturer. But the unexpected often happens, and these opponents had not calculated for the unexpected, and so their intentions were frustrated.

The lecturer described God's love for mankind in a beautifully touching manner that quite interested all, opponents included; then he spoke in affectionate terms of Jesus Christ as God's champion, and told the audience of what Jesus taught about God and His infinite love for man. And as he quoted the words of the Nazarene and explained their wonderful meaning—he repeatedly asked:

"Do you believe these words of Jesus—that they are true? You cannot call yourselves Christians—his followers unless you do believe them. But you do believe them, do you not?"

Each time he put this to them he had worked up to it as unto a climax, and the audience applauded in response.

Then he followed in a most persuasive manner, showing that if they really did believe all these grand and beautiful things Jesus said of God and His wonderful love for all men, they must see that Hell is a delusion, that there cannot be any everlasting torments, that none will be left suffering for ever and ever, and that all those who wander away and become lost will be sought for, found, and restored, and that every human soul will be saved.

Some shook their heads at this, but the lecturer described in such a clear and reasonable way that it could be no other than as he had said, that the great majority of those gathered round expressed their agreement in eager and joyful cheers, and every notion of treating the speaker with ridicule was killed before any attempt could be made.

The lecturer concluded by saying that this revelation of God's infinite love for all men without exception was the "Good news" and "Glad tidings," and "I bring you these glad tidings; and I think most of you agree with me that this is just the good news that should be carried to all people."

Many questions were asked and answered. The fair, reasonable, and persuasive manner of the lecturer quite disarmed opposition. Questions were put as genuine inquiries for more light, and more light was given; and at the end the people marvelled, and remained standing about in groups engaged in earnest talk and discussion of matters treated in the lecture and dealt with in the questions.

Ralph Rendel and Will went and spoke to the lecturer, thanking him for all that he had said, and they were for some little time engaged in talk with him.

As they walked away to turn homewards the darkness of the night had closed in, and it was getting late. For shortness they took a way along the towing path by the side of a canal. They were walking absorbed in deep converse, and when they were approaching a dark and lonely spot near a bridge, they were startled by the noise of a scuffle and the sound of high words. They at once eagerly pushed forward to discover what was amiss, and they heard a sudden splash and thought they saw men running away. Hurriedly reaching the spot from which the sounds had seemed to proceed, they thought they saw a struggling object in the water. They drew nearer, and a man's head emerged, and there came a hoarse and gurgling cry of "Help! help!"

Will said: "A drowning man! I can swim. I will jump in and save him."

And before Rendel could do anything either to assist or prevent him, Will had plunged in. Fortunately he reached the drowning man, caught hold of him behind the neck, and brought him to the bank, where Rendel was able to take hold and pull the unfortunate man out. As soon as Will was on the bank too, they laid the man down, found he was unconscious, and discovered that the face was that of Robert Colton, the father of Ruth.

By this time some other persons, attracted by the commotion, had joined them. By his quick breathing it was seen that Colton was really out of danger, at any rate from any effects of water, if he were not otherwise injured.

Rendel then said to Will:

"Now you go home as fast as you can, and get those wet clothes off. With the help of some of these standing near who, unlike you, are all dry, I will soon get Mr. Colton safely home. Now do not hesitate—but go; and we will make our way at once to Colton's."

Will did as he was bidden, and removed his wet clothing before he had taken any harm.

Robert Colton at home, divested of his sodden garments and placed in a warm bed, had returned to consciousness and gone off into a sound sleep.

Next morning Ralph Rendel called to see him, and found him awake and almost himself again."

"Who fetched me out of the water?" asked Colton.

"Will Smeeton," answered Rendel.

(To be continued.)

(The instalment contained in last issue should have been headed Chapter IX., and not VIII.)

Prayer—An Analogy.

Suppose that there is a child born into the home of a loving and excellent father and mother. The child grows up through infancy, childhood, youth, to manhood, dependent all the while upon its parents, loved by its parents, supported by its parents, educated at the expense of its parents, everything possible done to make its life happy and noble. Will it not be a fitting thing, think you, for that child to recognise its parents, to be grateful to its parents, to appreciate their love and care, to desire to know them and to live on terms of dutiful obedience and affectionate intimacy with them?

Now change the picture just a little—only a little—and we have an essentially correct representation, as I think, of man's situation—your situation and mine—upon the earth, as regards our relation to God. We are all, as I believe, the children of an Infinite Love and Care. We are not here because of our planning. We did not create the world in which we live; we cannot sustain it for a moment of time. We did not create ourselves. We cannot furnish ourselves with a morsel of food or a breath of air except as we get it from a source beyond and above ourselves. Our little intelligences are, as it were, candles lighted from the Great Intelligence that shines through all the ordered wisdom of the worlds. Our hearts' affections must have come from an Infinite Love-Fountain. And so as we look about us and within us we find the situation to be essentially that which I have pictured. We are all children; we have been born into a world which our Father has provided for us beforehand. This is our home. In this home we pass our earthly days.

Tell me, does it not seem fitting that we should desire to know and return the Father-love, that has given us all?—J. T. Sunderland, M.A.

The Bible in Sunday Schools.

[The following excellent paper was read by a young man at a meeting of the Male Adult Class of the Sunday School, Mossley Christian (Unitarian) Church. All our readers will not agree that "it matters not much what a person believes, so long as the belief is honest and sincere, and the life lived is a good one," but all will agree that "belief in itself is of moment so far as it affects conduct." Have Unitarians been unanimous in favour of "absolute exclusion" of the Bible from day schools? Unitarian Sunday Schools, with scarcely an exception, use the Bible as one of its class books.]

Is the Bible sufficiently used in our Sunday School; that is, in our own Unitarian Sunday School?

I believe that we are about the only body of Protestants who do not use the Bible exclusively in the Sunday School. Why is it we are so different from other denominations? In some of the classes here the Bible is very seldom used, and the knowledge of it which some of our scholars have, scanty as it is, has been obtained at the day schools, and has been taught by teachers with very different ideas and opinions concerning it than we ourselves hold. Considering the very important part the Bible has played, and still plays, in religious matters, it seems singular on the face of it, that we do not make more use of it. In any argument on religious matters I have always found that it comes back to a question of the authority of the Bible, and texts are quoted seemingly against us, and which certainly require a good deal of explanation.

What is the Bible, and why should we use it at all? Now Unitarians take a very different view of it than other denominations take, or rather, profess to take. Those denominations speak of it in rather a glib sort of a way as the "final revelation of God," "the inspired word of God," or the "infallible book," but I have found that a good many of them do not really believe this, and in fact, cannot give a clear definition of what they mean. We look at it in quite a different light. We read it just as we should read any other book. We do not believe that God has confined his revelation to any one period of the World's history, but that he speaks to men to-day just as he spoke to Moses and Abraham. We look upon the Bible as a collection of books, written by men at different times, and never written with the idea that they would be collected and bound together. The men who wrote did so to the best of their ability, and according to the knowledge which they possessed. We know that there are a good many errors in the Bible, and we cannot understand how people can claim infallibility for it, as a good many still seriously do, in the face of these. There is also a great deal written which we cannot accept—motives attributed to God which to us seem distinctly wicked, and events recorded which we cannot believe as ever having occurred. Of course, I know that there has been a great change in the view of the Bible during recent years, but it has been very reluctantly that orthodox people have modified their views; and there are still a good many who cling to the old belief. But in spite of errors and inconsistencies the Bible is admittedly the best of all books. It contains the records of the struggles which men have had from the earliest times, showing that a belief in the something we now call God has existed through all ages. It shows us the lives of the people who lived in those far-off times, their laws and customs, and gives us examples of many brave men and women. Then we get the life and teachings of Jesus and the Apostles, writings which have, without doubt, had a tremendous influence on the lives of millions of people. When Sir John Lubbock (now Lord Avebury) compiled his list of the hundred best books some few years ago, the Bible was not included. This was pointed out to him from many quarters, but his reply was that the Bible was unique, and must be prized above all others. What is this reply but the universal opinion of Christians.

Now what is the Sunday School? When Sunday Schools were first started there was no system of day school education such as we have to-day. John Pounds in his little cobbler's shop at Portsmouth had very different material from that which the Sunday School teachers of to-day have. The lads he got knew nothing of reading and writing, consequently these were the first subjects to be taught, and as Sunday Schools opened out, they were looked upon as essential subjects, and in fact, were the only subjects. Many of our own people here can well remember the time when they were taught at our own school. But what is the position to-day? Day schools have been built, and attendance made compulsory, and it is now within the reach of every child to obtain free of cost a far better secular education than could ever be obtained before. This leaves the Sunday school free to direct its energies in quite a different direction than that of mere imparting of knowledge, and the first and primary object of the Sunday School to-day should be towards the formation and development of character. The next object for us, as Unitarians, is to teach something of the principles of Unitarianism. Surely if we have a faith that is worth anything at all it is worth teaching to the children sent to our school, and if the Unitarian cause is to make any headway, more of it will have to be taught in the Sunday School. I do not mean that we should have a catechism for the children to learn, but that our teachers should teach them by illustration in as simple a manner as possible, which will be far better than having them learn a string of words which will be almost meaningless.

Now how shall we set out to attain these two objects? The first is, I think, most important. I do not think it matters much what a person believes, so long as the belief is honest and sincere, and the life lived is a good one. An unselfish life is of far more importance than belief; belief in itself is only of moment so far as it affects the conduct of life. Then how is this formation of character to be brought about. First of all by example; the scholars notice what the teacher does much more than what he says.

After this comes the value of the lessons given. Moral lessons, such as truthfulness, honesty, kindness, and unselfishness, are what we require for this teaching, and where can we find better illustrations than in the Bible. The Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, the Parables, and oceans of other illustrations may be used, and I think they could be made applicable for even the lowest classes. They are lessons which any teacher can give, and which do not require any great learning, theological or otherwise.

Then comes the second object, which is more the object I have in view by this paper. As a Unitarian Sunday School we certainly ought to teach Unitarianism much more than we do at present. There is a gulf between us and the rest of the Christian world, such as does not exist between any other religious bodies—something which seems to cut us off from them—and I think it is our duty to teach what this is. The crux of the whole matter rests on the authority of the Bible, and if we are to justify our position we must not only show what our views of the Bible are, but we must teach them to the children sent to us. We are in a very different position from other bodies in this respect: We do not base our belief on the Bible, as they do,—that is, we do not believe things simply because the Bible says so; we believe them because we feel them to be so, and we find that the Bible supports us. Of course there is a good deal in it that we cannot accept, but we should not cast the whole aside because of a few defects. We ought rather to make more use of it; to teach the scholars to look at it in a proper light, and not as something very mysterious which has only to be read occasionally.

Look at the great commotion on the recent education question. Unitarians have been practically unanimous on the absolute exclusion of the Bible from day schools. They hold that anything in the nature of religious instruction should be abolished altogether from day schools, and only secular subjects should be taught. This is certain to come about sooner or later, and when it does so where are our children to get to know anything of the Bible. Shall we go on then as we are doing now, leaving them to pick up their knowledge of it where they can, and teaching subjects that can be much better learned at evening classes; or are we to teach them what it really is and how to read it properly?

"Oh," I have heard it said, "most of our scholars are too young to bother about such things as these. Wait till they are older, and can read and think for themselves." This is all right, but surely we are firm enough in our beliefs to justify us in teaching them to others; and there is the great danger that if we do not teach and encourage them to read the Bible now the indifference shown would have its effect through life. We have to consider that as the scholars grow up they mingle with members of other denominations, most of whom have had rigid dogmatic teaching, and whose ideas of Unitarianism are often very erroneous; and unless we teach our scholars what it is so that they can correct these false impressions, we shall have to go on being misrepresented as we are to a very great extent at present. I think that much of the misunderstanding that exists as to our position is due to the ignorance of Unitarians, or at least, professed Unitarians, themselves.

There is also the remark, often heard, as to being Unitarians because our fathers were. Of course this does not apply exclusively to Unitarians because we hear it from people of many denominations. True, the "accident of birth," and early environment, have a very great effect on religious life, and such a remark might well apply to children, but surely we have reached an age when we ought to use our own faculties and think for ourselves, so as to be able to give a reason for "the faith that is in us." If we do not do so, and are satisfied to think that our parents' belief settled "our" religious life, then it is quite clear that we ourselves have no belief, and we are not worthy of the name of Unitarians, the very first principle of which is freedom of thought. What a state we should have been in to-day if everybody had held this idea, and had been satisfied to jog along without thinking for themselves. Where would our great reforms have been? We should never have had Unitarianism; we should never have had religion worth anything. The finest examples of human sacrifice would have been lost to us; men who were not content with believing what had been handed down to them, but who searched for the truth themselves, and had to suffer for doing so. What a world this would have been if everybody had been satisfied with things as they found them. Don't let us be Unitarians because our fathers were. It may be all right for the younger scholars, but let us start thinking for ourselves, and when we have done so speak and act according to our finding. We ought not to disregard the Bible because there are matters of a questionable nature in it; we ought to use it for both moral and religious lessons. I do not say exclusively by any means, because I know there are many other good books, but most of the writers of books of this kind have drawn their inspiration from the Bible; and, after all, it is the book on religious matters. I do not think we use it sufficiently by any means, and it is the duty of the teachers and elder scholars to use it and encourage the use of it as much as possible. Let us not be satisfied simply with moral teaching; there is something deeper in life, something which neither church, chapel, written creed nor dogma can settle, but which each individual must settle for himself. To do so he must have help and guidance, and where can he find it better than in the Bible?

DR. ROBERT COLLYER has come and gone. He has preached in several of our churches, attended many receptions, opened the Carnegie Free Library at Ilkley, had the degree of Doctor of Letters conferred upon him at a special court of the Leeds University—and gone well through all this at 84 years of age.

The Right Road.

I have lost the road to happiness—
Does anyone know it, I pray?
I was dwelling there when the morn was fair,
But somehow I wandered away.

I saw rare treasures in scenes of pleasures,
And ran to pursue them, when lo!
I had lost the path to happiness,
And I knew not whither to go.

I have lost the way to happiness—
Oh! who will lead me back?
Turn off from the highway of selfishness
To the right—up duty's track!

Keep straight along, and you can't go wrong;
For as sure as you live, I say,
The fair, lost fields of happiness
Can only be found that way.

—Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

Postal Mission Work.

By Miss FLORENCE HILL,
Hon. Sec. Central Postal Mission and Unitarian Workers' Union.

The Central Postal Mission Committee had the pleasure a few weeks ago of welcoming amongst them the Rev. W. H. Lambley, who had just returned from Australia after his long ministry at Melbourne. Mr. Lambley has interested himself very much in the Postal Mission, and he testifies to the useful work Miss Barnard is carrying on in America, and expressed a hope that it might be extended and better supported. He pointed out that there is really more need of an agency of this kind in Australia than even in England, because of the extreme isolation many people experience, more particularly those who live in the Bush or who are engaged in distant mines. They have little access to books of any kind, or opportunity of ministerial help or public worship, and devotional literature is much needed, and valued. It is difficult in this crowded England of ours to realise such a condition of things, but the letters we receive through the Postal Mission quite bear this out.

For instance, not long ago we received the following letter from Queensland: —

"I have an old magazine in my camp on the table-land near here (where I am tin-mining), and it offers information on Unitarianism free. Well, I am by conviction and reading a fervent believer in one God. Never seen a book on Unitarianism; educated in Yorkshire, travelled the whole world, and live where there are neither creeds nor parsons nor Bibles. Yet I see God in these wild mountains, and amongst the monarchs of the forest; but the class of individual one meets in my walk of life effectually banishes the serenity which is born of contemplation of natural objects. . . . Can you and will you send me some work to steady me in my belief in the great Architect of the universe? No doctrinal discussion can interest me; my belief is settled—I want to keep up to the mark in a life where all is against one. . . . Accept my thanks in anticipation. The good done will not be confined to myself alone, and if any natural curiosities, insects, geological specimens will interest you, I will send them in return for the books."

Another correspondent from Queensland, in acknowledging the first packet of pamphlets, wrote:—

"It is as near the religion of Jesus as flesh and blood can be. It is just the religion I have been seeking. Unitarianism is not heard of in Queensland—only sectarianism and dogmatic theology."

On suggesting that he should put himself in communication with a Unitarian minister, he wrote:—

"I live 23 miles beyond Brisbane, and Brisbane is 700 miles from Sydney and 1,500 from Adelaide, so you will see I am a long way from any Unitarian work, and I am indeed thankful for the booklets."

This same correspondent has done much in distributing literature; he has sent for devotional books, and takes the "Inquirer," and has made a generous donation to the Central Postal Mission.

Surely experiences like this ought to make us realise how important it is to sow the good seed in every land; and what a great work "Unity" might accomplish if it could be distributed broadcast, and could contain an Open Letter from leading ministers which would be a link to these scattered seekers after God and Truth!

The "Postcard" Sequel.

The "postcard" affair was in 1906. But again just recently, in 1907, the same Methodists in B—— have been holding a sale of work. This time they invited a wealthy Unitarian to be the chairman at the opening proceedings, and he consented. This appears, on the face of it, as very broad and catholic behaviour on both sides. And all the ministers resident in the town were invited, except one, and that one was the Unitarian. In his exclusion the catholicity is lacking.

The sale of work was opened; the chairman performed his duties satisfactorily, and—gave ten pounds to the sale of work fund. And, seeing several ministers present, no doubt before leaving he expressed a little surprise at not seeing his own minister there, and possibly before leaving he ventured to ask whether he had been invited, and discovered that he was not invited.

For a few days after, the Unitarian minister received a letter from the Methodist minister, saying how sorry he was that he had forgotten to invite him to the sale of work.

This sequel has more than one moral. It has one for ministers, but a very special one for our wealthy laymen. They may well ask themselves: What is our duty to our own churches, to our own ministers, to our own Faith? And—there is another query, too —Where is our self-respect?

Definitions: By Centonarius.

FAITH.—This word has at least six different meanings, and no word has given the writer more trouble to find a satisfactory statement of the signification which lies at the root of all the derived senses in which it is used. It is hard to believe that any word in the English language has been more abused, more often used in wrong or degenerate senses. Many men simply mean by it the blind acceptance of their particular schemes or theory of things. In popular language the Encyclopædia Britannica tells us it is taken to mean "the acceptance of something as true which is not known to be true." Such demands, indeed, on one's credulity have been made in the sacred name of faith, that the schoolboy's definition is not to be surprised at: Believing what you know ain't so; and Voltaire may be pardoned for his cynical remark that "faith consists in believing things because they are impossible."

The primary meaning, however, of this slippery word is evident from its derivation—Latin, fides, trust, confidence; hence, a frame of mind which relies upon another.

What is Faith, but to believe what you do not see? ((St. Augustine).

The soul's trust in God on the strength of its own experience. (R. T. Herford, B.A.)

Faith is the sense of the unseen which detects, recognises, loves, and trusts the goodness in numerous forms and persons in the world, and rises to its height in trusting Him who is its source and sun. (John Watson, D.D.)

Faith is a deep-rooted trust in the instincts of the soul, which assure us that God will secure the ultimate victory of truth, right, love, goodness, life.

Faith is that which, when probabilities are equal, ventures on God's side, and on the side of right, on the guarantee of something which makes a thing seem true because loved. (F. W. Robertson.)

Faith affirms many things respecting which the senses are silent, but none that they deny. (Pascal). It is never antagonistic to understanding; "it is the supplement to reason in the sphere of the unseen." (John Watson, D.D.)—When reason comes to the edge of the cliff, it can go no further; then faith opens its strong wings and passes out in the lonely quest for God.

Both critical reason and the experience of the inward man have their times of dulness, inactivity, torpidity, non-illumination. Faith is the unswerving trust, at such seasons, in the enduring verity of those things which, in their moments of power and illumination, the critical reason and the experience of the soul have taught us. Faith is trust in our own highest and purest self. (R. A. Armstrong, B.A.)

A man of strong faith in the reality of God will do his duty regardless of consequences, and right in the teeth of his immediate happiness, trusting that sometime, somehow, and somewhere, God will make good to be the final goal of ill."

SUPERSTITION is the clinging to some belief in the misused name of faith in despite of experience and reason. (R. A. Armstrong, B.A.)

An unreasoning fear of the unknown. (Canon Kingsley.)

CREDULITY is a temper of mind prone to accept as true what is opposed to reason.

The Jesus of History.

The return to the historical Jesus will involve much sifting of time-honoured beliefs, much readjustment of the perspectives of the future. Many elements, once thought vital to faith, will gradually fall away and disappear. The entire cycle of Messianic Conceptions will pass out of the sphere of religion, and cease to prescribe the patterns of our hope. In a large and more ancient universe than Jesus ever knew, we shall not expect him to reappear in our skies, roll back the deep of our seas, and draw forth from the earth the reanimate forms of the uncounted dead. The doctrines belonging to the old order which have established themselves in the so-called Apostle's Creed, from the virgin birth to the resurrection of the body, will one by one lose their vitality and cease to control the faith of those who understand the processes which gave them shape. Ecclesiastical Christianity may be shaken; but the religion of Jesus will be untouched. Then, as of old, men will still learn of him to say "Our Father." Then, as of old, with a wider outlook and a fuller knowledge,—may it be also with as deep a love and trust,—they will repeat his prayer:—

"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done,
As in heaven, so on earth."

—J. E. CARPENTER.

TO CORRESPONDENTS: Any persons asking for advice or information from the Editor, and desiring a written reply, should not forget to enclose a stamped envelope to cover cost of postage.

TO CONTRIBUTORS: The special object of this paper is the propagation of Unitarian doctrines and ideas, and the space has to be filled mainly with matter which helps directly or indirectly to that end. Articles on subjects which have no direct bearing on our special work, reports of concerts, bazaars, etc., we have no room for.

CHURCH ADVERTISEMENTS: Church appeals, bazaar efforts, and sales of work cannot be inserted gratis, as is sometimes expected; all advertisements cost something, and the Editor has to pay for them. This paper is published at cost price, as near as it possibly can be, to cover expense of printing and distribution, without payment of work of Editor and contributors; it is a gift of missionary help to our churches. In return for this help the Editor looks for increasing co-operation and support from churches and missionary organisations. Receipts from advertisements help the paper to pay the bare costs of production already named.

The Religion the Age Wants.

On of the most pressing demands of the age is for a practical religion; that addresses itself to moral and social reforms; that grapples with the evils and vices of the time; that will help us in solving the difficulties and removing the curses of drunkenness, immorality, pauperism and beggary. Had Christianity been regarded more as a daily doing of righteousness and less as a creed, many miseries would not have stained and saddened our country to such an extent. And has not Christianity been so misconceived that it has been robbed of practical influence on the realities of life?

Religion is righteous work. Fed by devotion it does not stop there. It is not alone to know, but to act according to knowledge. It is to do wholesome work among the anomalies, inequalities and iniquities of social life—spreading truth, honesty, integrity in our commercial life—struggling for righteousness, justice, purity in our own municipal and political life,—deepening and enlightening our spiritual life. The religion of useful service helps on those causes by which the degraded are regenerated through the agency of generous sympathies and kindly deeds. It is putting hand and heart to laws, institutions and movements by means of which human woes will be alleviated and human wrongs by slow degrees will be redressed.

It was love for Man as Man that inspired Jesus, and constrained Paul in their spiritual reformation. The enthusiasm of humanity is always the reforming power. The great heroisms of the world are owing to men and women whose life-blood has been love for the human race, with whom sympathy with man was such a power, and such a passion, that it enabled them to work their noble deeds.

Let our social relations be suffused, let the work of commerce and the conduct of legislation be provided, and let the ministrations of religion be permeated by the spirit of brotherhood, and there will then be in operation an influence that will really mend the world. —S. F. WILLIAMS.

Inspiration.

There are two ways by which thought and knowledge come to us,—from without and from within.

One class of men, and that the largest, gather their knowledge mostly from without,—by observation, experience of life, or mingling with men and things. Thus they grow wise, always acquiring some new knowledge of nature or of man from the world around.

Another class of men seem to have a fountain of thought within; ideas follow into their minds from some hidden source. They are poets, artists, inventors, discoverers, seers, prophets. They are often possessed by an idea which drives them forward, regardless of outward consequences. Many of this class fall by the wayside and are trodden down. They write books which no one reads, paint pictures, which no one buys, bore their friends with their hobbies which no one takes an interest in, fight for impracticable reforms, devote their lives to inventions which never come to anything, preach theories which no one attends to. These are men of imperfect inspiration—a feeble stream which is soon lost in the sand.

But sometimes men come with an inspiration so strong that it carries them forward in spite of all opposition, till they triumph. These are reformers like Luther, founders of religion like Buddha and Mohammed, discoverers like Columbus, inventors like Fulton. They follow an inward light, whether men will hear or forbear, and at last they see the work of their hands, and are satisfied. So Howard, the philanthropist finally overcame the dead resistance of stupidity, self-interest, and prejudice. So Garrison conquered the mighty combination which upheld slavery.

The essential fact of inspiration is the same in all such men. They all follow an inward light, an idea, a conviction in their own soul. They did not make this idea; it came to them. It haunts them when awake; mingles with their dreams. If they try to escape from it, it pursues them. If they succeed, they are called men of genius, heroes, prophets; if they fail, they are called fanatics, and men say to them, "Thou are beside thyself; much learning hath made thee mad."

The kinds and degrees of inspiration are various. At the summit of all is religious inspiration; and far above all other kinds of religious inspiration is Christian inspiration. Mohammed, Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster, were no doubt inspired men; they saw in their souls some divine truths. But while the races and nations taught by these masters have been imperfectly developed, the best and highest civilisation of mankind has been fed by Christianity. A few plain men, quite ignorant of everything but the gospel of love, were able to establish a religion which in a few centuries overturned Paganism, and took possession of the Roman empire. For eighteen centuries this religion has been associated with everything progressive and ennobling in the history of our race with all that restrains the tyrant, and consoles the wretched.

But this inspiration took a different form in each man, according to his genius and character. The inspiration of Paul was unlike that of John. Paul was more speculative; John more meditative; James more practical; Peter more of a churchman. These differences appear in the epistles of each writer. Agreeing in essentials, each of them loving and serving Christ, each teaches Christianity in his own way. The law of Spiritual life in Christ Jesus is a law of freedom and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. The inspiration of each man is an indwelling life, intensifying all his powers, but not destroying his individuality.—J. FREEMAN CLARKE

(Abridged by Centonarius.)

Received: "Among the Dutchmen," by the Rev. Lucking Tavener; "Paul," by the late Prof. Dr. W. Wrede, of Breslau, translated by E. Lummis, M.A.; "The Early Church, its Orders and Institutions," by A. Hermann Thomas, M.A.; "Rabbi, Messiah, Martyr, a Modern Picture of the Story of Jesus," by Herbert Rix, B.A.; "The Virgin Birth," by Charles Travers. Notices next issue.

Notes and News.

"THE UNITY" NAME.—In our issue of December, 1906, it was announced that some slight alteration of the name of this paper was necessary to avoid being confused with an American magazine called "Unity," and also with an Oddfellows' monthly in England of the same name; and so as to keep to the original name as near as possible, "The UNITY" was adopted instead of "Unity." Several other alternatives were suggested, including "The New Unity," and the Editor's own idea—"The UNITY Advocate." This last was objected to by one of our contributors as being too "legal" in character. But "The UNITY" is not permanently satisfactory, and the Editor is still of the opinion that "The UNITY Advocate," while including the original title, does express most plainly the aim of the paper. Beginning with 1908 then, he proposes to have that as the settled and permanent name. If there is any serious objection to that, it should at once be made known to the Editor.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS.—This was certainly a great success. Only about 1,000 people were expected to purchase tickets of membership, but over 2,500 were secured; the largest halls in Boston were only half large enough to accommodate the people seeking admission; 132 representatives attended from England, including about 80 ministers; the provision made by the Boston Unitarians for the hospitality and entertainment of the visitors from other countries was most considerate, lavish, and generous. In addition to the daily meetings of the Congress, there were excursions to Concord, Plymouth, Fairhaven, and a day at Harvard and Cambridge. These were intensely interesting and never-to-be-forgotten. The general impression amongst the English delegates was that there were too many meetings, too many addresses—some of them wearisome in their great length, especially those in foreign languages which very few could understand—and it was felt that in such respects the Congress might on future occasions be much better arranged.

Some of the British delegates had a very rough passage home, especially those who returned on the "Umbria" from New York on Sept. 28th. A very severe gale flooded the saloons, and did much damage to the decks. Fifty-four returned from Boston on Oct. 1st on the "Saxonia," including 35 ministers. They had some rough weather, too, without injury. A hearty Unitarian service was held in the second saloon on Sunday evening, Oct. 6th: preacher, Rev. W. G. Tarrant, B.A., assisted in the devotions by Mr. F. Maddison, M.P. One God, One Gospel of Truth, One Humanity, are amongst the verities most deeply impressed upon the minds of those of the various nationalities from all parts of the world who attended the Congress. The next Congress is to be at Berlin in 1910.

THE VAN MISSION has completed its season's work with the coming of October, and it has more than surpassed anticipations in the success of the four separate vans on their respective tours. Good meetings have been held during September in Yorkshire, Cheshire, London district, and Scotland, with audiences reaching over 1,000. The movement has attracted the notice of all the leading London papers. A Methodist minister is reported to have said that there is "something like a real revival taking place among Unitarians." The Rev. T. P. Spedding, interviewed by a London Press Agency, said that it is impossible to predict what will be the extent of the mission work undertaken by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association next year, but that, encouraged by results already achieved, they will go ahead with renewed energy.

The Rev. J. Matthewman, a Wesleyan preacher at Hastings, has gained a little notoriety by saying in a sermon that he would rather be a crossing-sweeper than a Unitarian minister. This has been called an "impertinence" and an "insult" by some local Unitarians, and the Unitarian minister of Hastings is blamed for not indignantly resenting it. But even Unitarians ought not to lose their heads. If Mr. Matthewman is a sincere and thorough-going Wesleyan, he must believe that Unitarianism is a very bad and dangerous thing, and it is quite honest of him to say what he has said. Would not any thorough Unitarian rather be a crossing-sweeper than a Wesleyan minister? Of course he would; and it is no insult to say it.

The Rev. George Dawes Hicks, M.A., Ph.D., Litt.D., sub-editor of the "Hibbert Journal," Professor of Moral Philosophy University College, London, evidently dislikes Unitarian propaganda. Though nominally a Unitarian minister himself, he says in "The Inquirer" that the hot zeal for such propaganda fills him "with despair" as week by week "the wearisome story is repeated." He sees incompatibility between the "Catholic" principle of the Unity of the Spirit—and Unitarianism, as the late Dr. Martineau did. But in both cases this is owing to a very narrow conception of Unitarianism. Is any real Catholicity possible outside of Unitarianism which is not possible inside? Is any "Unity of the Spirit" in religious fellowship possible between the Rev. J. Matthewman and Unitarians? Shall we silence our prophets and cease voicing our Message out of deference to a misconception and a strange dream of an impossible union of orthodoxy and heterodoxy? There is no more Catholic principle than the Unitarian doctrine of salvation by character and not by creed.

THE MILL HILL PULPIT: See advt. of Dr. Robert Collyer's Sermon. The monthly issue of Mr. Hargrove's sermons is discontinued, though it is hoped that sermons preached in the Mill Hill pulpit may be published, and anyone sending Mr. Chas. Stainer a shilling will have sent them a copy of eight issues as they come out. Mr. Stainer has voluntarily carried on this great work, as publisher, for 15 years.

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